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Official Records

First Committee
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New York

Chairperson: Mrs. Juul ..... (Norway)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 82 to 97 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairperson: I would like to remind all delegations that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions is 6 p.m. today. I would also like to stress again that delegations should ensure that the content of their submissions is accurate so that documents can be processed in a timely and efficient manner. In the event that delegations need to make minor changes or technical corrections to draft resolutions, I would kindly urge them to revise them orally, if possible, rather than requesting the Secretariat to issue a revised document. That would certainly help to maximize the efficiency of the Committee's work, while saving costs for the Organization.

Let us now begin our thematic discussion on the subjects of other weapons of mass destruction and the disarmament aspects of outer space.

Today, we have a guest speaker: the President-designate of the Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, Ambassador Masood Khan. I now invite Ambassador Khan to make a statement.

Mr. Khan (Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference): Thank you, Madam Chairperson, for giving me the opportunity to address the Committee and to hear its views on the pressing issue of biological weapons. I would also like to thank Mr. Nabuaki Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his support and comments. Last week, he said that, in confronting the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), "practical, positive steps are within our reach". Let us take such steps with regard to biological weapons.

This thematic discussion in the First Committee is well timed. The Sixth Review Conference is around the corner, only a few short weeks away. Here in New York, we can take stock of the situation and consider the challenges and possibilities that lie before us. My remarks today will refer to the *PowerPoint* presentation that will be displayed in the conference room.

Let me start with two quotations. The first is from Secretary-General Kofi Annan who, on 5 December 2005, said that the Biological Weapons Convention was as relevant then as it was 30 years before, and that

> "Developments in the life sciences in the years ahead will no doubt bring remarkable benefits, but they may also carry with them, as an almost inevitable corollary, considerable dangers. There has never been more urgent need for international commitment to the universal application [of] and full compliance with the Convention".

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The second quotation is from Mr. Hans Blix, who stated in the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission Report of 1 June 2006 that

> "Nuclear, biological and chemical arms are the most inhumane of all weapons. Designed to terrify as well as destroy, they can, in the hands of either States or non-State actors, cause destruction on a vastly greater scale than any conventional weapons, and their impact is far more indiscriminate and long-lasting".

What is it that we can do at the Sixth Review Conference? It is an opportunity to reaffirm the ban on biological and toxin weapons. It is a chance to address the threat posed by the possible use of such weapons by terrorists. It is a matter of tremendous importance for global health and international peace and security. It also gives us an opportunity to explore cooperation and exchanges for responsible use of the biosciences for human development.

The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has had marked success in defining a clear and unambiguous global norm completely prohibiting the acquisition and use of biological and toxin weapons under any circumstances. The preamble to the Convention forcefully states that the use of disease as a weapon would be "repugnant to the conscience of mankind". The Convention captures the solemn undertaking of the States parties "never in any circumstance to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain" such weapons. With 155 States parties, the treaty is not universal, but no country dares argue that biological weapons can ever have a legitimate role in national defence. Such is the force of the treaty.

The BWC is a landmark treaty. States parties have made dual commitments under the treaty, to destroy biological weapons and not to arm or re-arm. Successive Review Conferences have strengthened the Convention. We need to do more to make it more relevant and effective. The key lies in its faithful implementation.

The BWC is part of a network. It is a fundamental pillar, along with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) of the global regime against weapons of mass destruction. It is also part of a network of measures that deal directly and indirectly with the prevention of and response to biological weapons. Other parts of this network include the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), Interpol, UNESCO, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), the international scientific organizations and the various United Nations agencies involved with emergency response.

Coordination is becoming ever more important. The Secretary-General in his recent report entitled "Uniting against terrorism: recommendations for a global terrorism strategy" (A/60/825), suggests the creation of a forum to coordinate these activities. The Review Conference will be, in effect, just such a forum, and we should use it as such.

We are all familiar with the history of the Convention, particularly that of the recent past. The Convention experienced disappointments, due largely to a difference of opinion on how to strengthen and improve its effectiveness. Changes in the international security environment since 2001, especially the focus on the threat of bioterrorism, have added urgency to our task. The Review Conference should build on the success of the Convention, find ways to overcome problems and convert divergences into convergences.

Our common objectives should be to strengthen the barriers against biological weapons, reduce the risk of bioterrorism and ensure that the vitally important peaceful applications of biological science and technology are safely and securely developed to their full potential for the benefit of people around the world.

We have already made a good start. We have a provisional agenda in our hands, thanks to the maturity and wisdom demonstrated by States parties. It is an agenda that is flexible enough to ensure a thorough review of all aspects of the Convention. At the Preparatory Committee in April, we met all the objectives we had set for ourselves and settled all the necessary procedural machinery. We are not sitting on our laurels. It is time to move to substance. Some States parties have already been working hard. A number of papers have been developed and circulated for discussion, and I understand that more are on their way.

I have had the opportunity to discuss ideas and proposals with individual delegations and with groups. It is too early to give a definitive account of what will

be on the table at the Review Conference. But let me give members a sense of what I have heard delegations express interest in so far. The field is still wide open.

Let me start this part of my presentation with an excerpt from the Hippocratic Oath:

> "I will apply dietetic measures for the benefit of the sick according to my ability and judgement; I will keep them from harm and injustice.
>
> "I will neither give a deadly drug to anybody if asked for it, nor will I make a suggestion to this effect".

Biological weapons are not science fiction. The use of disease as a weapon is a real and potent threat. Bioweapons have struck or stalked us since ancient times. Designed for military use or terrorist attacks, biological weapons kill or injure human beings, animals and plants. In their impact, they are as deadly as nuclear weapons, or even deadlier. They hit and disable combatants and civilians alike. They do not distinguish between friend and foe. Their vicious fury strikes massively and indiscriminately and the death caused by them is gruesome.

Let me recapitulate some of the key articles of the Convention. The preamble, as I said earlier, says that the use of biological agents and toxin weapons is repugnant to the conscience of mankind. States parties to the Convention agree or undertake: under article I, never under any circumstances to acquire or retain biological weapons; under article II, to destroy or divert to peaceful purposes biological weapons and associated resources prior to joining the Convention; under article III, not to transfer, or in any way assist, encourage or induce anyone else to acquire or retain biological weapons; under article IV, to take any national measures necessary to implement the provisions of the BWC domestically; under article V, to consult bilaterally and multilaterally to solve any problems with the implementation of the BWC; under article VI, to request the Security Council to investigate alleged breaches of the BWC and to comply with its subsequent decisions; under article VII, to assist States which have been exposed to a danger as a result of a violation of the BWC; and under article X, to do all of the aforementioned in a way that encourages the peaceful uses of biological science and technology.

Biological warfare and bioterrorism involve the deliberate cause or spread of disease by biological agents used as a weapon. Such weapons have the potential to cause immense human harm. My *PowerPoint* slide lists some of the agents here, and also incidents going back to ancient times: the sixth century, the fourteenth century, the fifteenth century, the First World War, and then we have a landmark, when the Geneva Protocol was adopted in 1925. The slides show instances of its use and research on it from the 1930s well into the 1960s. In 1972, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention was signed, and it has now been ratified by 155 States. Recent incidents include: salmonella, sarin in 1995, anthrax in 2001 and 2002, avian influenza in recent years, the scare of a ricin conspiracy in 2003 and one instance in the Pankisi Gorge in Georgia in 2002. Here, results were different from initial claims.

What is the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission's advice for the Sixth Review Conference? It says, first, that it should reaffirm common understandings reached at previous Review Conferences and take action on all subjects addressed at Convention meetings since 2003. Secondly, States should ensure the more frequent reassessment of the implications of scientific and technological developments, reaffirm that all undertakings under article I of the BWC apply to such developments and reaffirm that all developments in the life sciences both fall within the scope of the BWC and that all such development for hostile purposes are prohibited by the Convention.

We have four challenges to meet: universal adherence to the Convention; the threat of terrorists or non-State actors gaining access to biological weapons; the immense potential of the life sciences to be tapped in the right manner; and the need to strengthen compliance with the Convention.

Regarding adherence to the BWC, let me tell the First Committee that we need to universalize the Convention, which at the moment has 155 States parties and 16 signatories. There are 23 States which have neither signed nor ratified. We should work towards universal compliance before 2011. The Sixth Review Conference should be a starting point for that effort. The European Union has already committed resources for this undertaking.

In his report "Uniting against terrorism" Secretary-General Kofi Annan has given us a strategy of five Ds: dissuasion, denial, deterrence, development and defence. He has also suggested the establishment of a forum that would bring together all the key stakeholders.

Regarding new scientific developments, life scientists have to become more aware of how their work can impinge on the BWC's legal and ethical norms against bioweapons. New vaccines, intended for instance to cure Alzheimer's disease, can be used for harmful purposes. Scientists are increasingly getting used to the idea of inviting enhanced scrutiny and peer observation. But that responsibility does not stop at the door of scientists. Governments and relevant agencies should always be in a position to monitor scientific advances that may lead to the production of bioweapons that are resistant to known medicines and to develop effective measures against them.

Codes of conduct are difficult to formulate. Many life sciences deal with dual-use materials and technologies. Scientists and administrators should be involved in the development, adoption and review of codes of conduct. These codes should be simple, clear and broad in scope and compatible with national legislation and regulatory controls, and they should contribute to national implementation measures.

Regarding the intersessional process, the meetings that took place between 2003 and 2005 addressed the following subjects: national implementation, security and oversight of pathogens, capabilities for responding to and investigating alleged uses of biological weapons, mechanisms for disease surveillance and response and codes of conduct for scientists.

Some lessons learned were that discussions that are not expected to lead to binding commitments are more collegial, cooperative and constructive; States parties and all other actors learn more. They raise awareness; they are less polemical; and they keep the focus on the BWC and make it responsive to contemporary developments. Side discussions serve as building blocks that States parties can use for possible agreements when they are ready to do so; they also work as catalysts for agreements. There is a growing sense among States that the Sixth Review Conference should decide on an intersessional calendar from 2007 to 2010.

An object lesson is that we have to be aware of the dangers posed by lone disaffected scientists or lurking bioterrorists.

Compliance hinges on intent. Strong national legislation and administrative measures are critical to coordinated and coherent implementation of the Convention. Precautions should be taken to ensure that research in biodefence programmes has a defensive orientation, is amenable to scientific oversight and conforms to the BWC.

It is too early to give a definitive account of what will be on the table at the Review Conference. In any case, it is not my role to dictate the menu; I am a servant of the process. But here are some of the suggestions that I would like to make: we should have a concise document, which should be easily understandable; we need to record our understandings and commitments in a way that communicates them, not only to the States parties, but also to the media, the scientific community, industry and the general public. That is important to ensure that the struggle against biological weapons is a shared effort across Governments, commerce and civil society. It is also important for the promotion and development of the peaceful applications of biological sciences and technology.

It is important for us to recapture and reaffirm, very briefly, core elements of the Convention and previous understandings reached by States parties. Because of the phenomenal advances in the life sciences, it will be both prudent and desirable to state that the Convention applies to all relevant scientific and technological developments. It would also be useful to recall the understanding that the Convention implicitly prohibits the use of biological weapons.

The Chairperson: I am obliged to interrupt the speaker. There is a great deal of noise in the room. I would request members to respect our speaker and try to be quieter. Members should take their places, or should leave the room if consultations are necessary.

Mr. Khan (Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference): I am glad that my presentation has stimulated several parallel discussions; there are lots of bilateral discussions going on.

With regard to article X, our security measures should not impede, but should enable and support, the peaceful application of biological science and

technology for human development through cooperation and exchanges. We must review what was done in the recent past; I have talked about that.

We also have some elements relating to what could go into the outcome document. Common themes are already emerging. I have heard delegations express interest in proposals relating to the following areas: an intersessional calendar of meetings and activities on agreed topics for the period 2007-2010; confidence-building measures; the universalization of the Convention; new scientific and technological developments; scientific and technological cooperation and exchanges; bioterrorism; compliance and verification; coordination with other organizations; and implementation support arrangements for the Convention, inter alia, to run a new intersessional process.

That list is indicative. The States parties are the ultimate arbiters of the substance and content of the outcome document. The subjects to which I referred could be used to develop the document.

We will take a two-pronged approach. We will undertake an article-by-article review of the Convention, and many issues which fall naturally under one or other of the articles of the Convention can be dealt with in that review. We will also have an opportunity for a more thematic consideration to deal with those issues that by their very nature cut across several articles of the Convention. We retain the flexibility to manage our work as the Conference proceeds.

We have a very competent Bureau. The Committee of the Whole, under the capable chairmanship of Ambassador Doru Costea of Romania, will devote itself to the article-by-article review. As the Committee of the Whole proceeds with this work, I would propose the convening of informal working groups, as needed, to address any issues that appear to be more suited to a thematic approach.

Once the various proposals have been sufficiently developed and refined through those two complementary avenues, I suggest that we convene the Drafting Committee, under the equally capable chairmanship of Mr. Knut Langeland of Norway, to draw the threads together and produce a concise, coherent and cohesive outcome document. We will have not a sequential, but a simultaneous, approach. We are lucky to have Mr. Tim Caughley as the Secretary General. Mr. Richard Lennane, the Secretary, is helping out with the entire process, and he is being assisted by Mr. Piers Millet.

What we need is synergy, not a trade-off. What can States parties do? They should prepare concise proposals and share them with others. They should meet within their own groups and with other principal interlocutors. They should prepare their ministries to help out with universal adherence and implementation. They should sensitize top decision-makers to the importance of the BWC. They should continue dialogue with industry, international organizations, academia, the media and non-governmental organizations. They should touch base with other capitals before going to Geneva. It is our collective responsibility to develop good interpersonal chemistry among negotiators. We should ensure good conference management. Above all, I would say, "Be in a good mood when you go to Geneva, and go to Geneva to succeed".

I have spelled out what the median point could be — I will not belabour the point, because I have already touched on most of these issues. Finally, I would like to say that there is no silver bullet. There is a lot of heavy lifting involved, and we will have to do it collectively.

I would like to ask members of the First Committee — those who are listening to me — to give their views to me. Ask questions; make observations; give guidance. The Chairperson, her gavel and the red light will determine how much time you have to do all of this.

The Chairperson: It is now my intention to suspend the meeting in order to provide the Committee with the opportunity to have an interactive discussion with our guest speaker in the form of an informal question and answer session.

The meeting was suspended at 3.35 p.m. and resumed at 3.45 p.m.

The Chairperson: I will now give the floor to delegations wishing to make statements on today's thematic subject. I would invite delegations to first make statements on the subject of other weapons of mass destruction. After we have concluded that subject, we will move to the subject of outer space. Delegations are also welcome to combine the two subjects.

Mr. Kahilvoto (Finland): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU). The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and the European Free Trade Association countries Norway and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union is guided by its commitment to uphold, implement and strengthen the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements. Meeting the challenge of proliferation risks constitutes a key element in the European Union's external relations.

The European Union strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction commits the Union to act with resolve, using all instruments and policies at its disposal to prevent, deter, halt and, where possible, eliminate proliferation programmes of concern worldwide.

The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) have an essential role in countering the threat of chemical and biological weapons. Together with other key multilateral agreements, they provide a basis for the international community's disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, which contribute to international confidence, stability and peace, including the fight against terrorism. We urge States that are not parties to those treaties to adhere to them and join the mainstream, and we also urge all States to meet their obligations under Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1673 (2006). We continue to urge all those States that are parties to the treaties to take all necessary steps to implement their obligations under those treaties and the two resolutions mentioned earlier, including in relation to enacting penal legislation. The EU stands ready to assist to that end when requested to do so.

The Union believes that control of emerging technology will continue to be an issue of considerable concern in the area of chemical and biological weapons. The potential for the illicit use of such technologies has been specifically mentioned in scientific literature and highlights the need to monitor technological developments in respect of emerging processes and related equipment with potential use in chemical and biological weapons programmes. We intend to be active in that area.

Cooperation with other countries to reduce and eliminate weapons of mass destruction within the framework of the Global Partnership initiative is a part of the European Union strategy and its Common Position on the NPT. The EU underlines the relevance of the G-8 Partnership initiatives to weapons of mass destruction-related disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is particularly topical at this time, as the Sixth Review Conference of the Convention will be taking place soon, in November and December. The EU considers the Convention a key component of the international disarmament and non-proliferation framework and the cornerstone of efforts to prevent biological agents and toxins from ever being developed and used as weapons. Our efforts are aimed at strengthening this Convention further, and we remain committed to the development of measures to verify compliance with the Convention in the longer term.

The EU will promote a successful outcome of the BTWC Review Conference by contributing to a full review of the operation of the Convention, including the implementation of the undertakings of the States parties under the Convention. The EU is ready to do its part in building consensus for a substantive outcome, on the basis of the framework established by previous Review Conferences.

We will promote, inter alia, the following essential issues: universal adherence of all States to the Convention; full compliance with obligations under the Convention and their effective implementation by all States Parties; national implementation measures and control over pathogenic micro-organisms and toxins in the framework of the Convention; working towards devising effective mechanisms to strengthen and verify compliance with the BTWC; efforts to enhance transparency through the increased exchange of information among States parties, including through annual information exchanges among them; compliance with the obligations undertaken under Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1673 (2006), in particular to eliminate the risk of biological

or toxin weapons being acquired or used for terrorist purposes; the G-8 Global Partnership programmes; and decisions on further action on the work undertaken to date during the previous intersessional programme.

The Union will support a further intersessional work programme before the next Review Conference, which should be held no later than 2011. We will contribute to identifying specific areas and procedures for further progress under that work programme. We have submitted working papers in which our views and suggestions are elaborated on in detail.

The Union is fully prepared to play a constructive role in ensuring that our joint efforts lead to meaningful and practical results at the Conference. We support the efforts of the President-designate of the Conference to that effect.

While preparing for the Review Conference, the EU is taking practical measures to promote the universalization and effective national implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, including regional workshops and assistance on relevant legal and technical aspects. That is being done through our Joint Action, giving implementation to some elements of our weapons of mass destruction strategy. In parallel with our Joint Action, we have also adopted an Action Plan in which the EU member States undertook to submit confidence-building measures returns to the United Nations each year, as well as to consider and volunteer expertise to the Secretary-General in helping him update the lists of experts and laboratories on which he may call for investigation of the alleged use of chemical or biological weapons.

We welcome the fact that the resolution on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted by the General Assembly on 6 September last encouraged the Secretary-General to update the roster of experts and laboratories as well as the technical guidelines and procedures available to him. More generally, regarding the exchange of information, including confidence-building measures, we also welcome the new BTWC Internet site, set up by the Department for Disarmament Affairs, as a valuable tool.

The EU acknowledges the progress made towards the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), a unique disarmament and non-proliferation instrument. We fully support the organization that is ensuring the implementation of the CWC and compliance with its demands, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Our support for the OPCW extends to very practical cooperation, thus giving immediate and practical implementation to some elements of the EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. That practical support is focused on the promotion of the universality of the CWC, support for implementation of the CWC by the States parties, and international cooperation in the field of chemical activities.

The EU believes that the CWC must be strictly applied. One of the most important features of the CWC is the obligation for possessors of chemical weapons to destroy their stockpiles by specified deadlines. We continue to urge such possessors to take every possible step to meet those deadlines. In supporting that aim, the EU — and, bilaterally, several of its member States — has provided assistance to Russia. The EU underlines also the necessity for all States parties to implement in their own legislation the Convention's provisions, as per article VII.

We would recall that States acceding to or ratifying and implementing the CWC can be provided assistance by the OPCW to comply fully with the provisions of the Convention. We would like also to reiterate here our offer of assistance as communicated to all States parties by the Director-General of the OPCW.

The EU believes that the verification regime implemented by the OPCW is an essential means of deterring non-compliance with the Convention and of increasing transparency, confidence and international security. Within that regime, challenge inspections remain a valid tool, and the EU believes that the Technical Secretariat must be well prepared and equipped to conduct such inspections. Furthermore, the EU supports the efforts being made to maintain its readiness.

Turning to the issue of ballistic missiles, in addressing the issue of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, the European Union supports the Hague Code of Conduct, which, since its inception in November 2002, has become an important instrument for the promotion of transparency and confidence-building and a practical contribution against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In particular, we continue to underline the

fact that the Code constitutes the most concrete initiative in the fight against the proliferation of ballistic missiles and a fundamental step towards effectively addressing the problem of missile proliferation from a multilateral global perspective.

We are pleased that 124 countries have already subscribed to the Code and that additional countries are seriously considering taking that step soon. However, the strength of the Code depends on the full implementation of the transparency measures foreseen by all subscribing States. The EU therefore urges all subscribing States to fully implement the Code's transparency measures.

Here, I would like to take the opportunity to briefly address the question of outer space activities. The EU is aware of the growing involvement of the international community in outer space activities aimed at development and progress and of the increasing dependence on outer space for economic and industrial development, as well as for security. We are actively cooperating in various space initiatives. Such activities should be developed in a peaceful environment. An arms race in outer space must be prevented. Such prevention is an essential condition for the strengthening of strategic stability and the promotion of international cooperation aimed at the free exploration and use of outer space by all States for peaceful purposes.

We recognize a growing convergence of views on the elaboration of measures to strengthen transparency, confidence and security in the peaceful uses of outer space. We also appreciated the careful consideration of the issue of preventing an arms race in outer space this year by the Conference on Disarmament. We consider that to be an important matter to be dealt with in the Conference, in a way that is subject to agreement by all.

To conclude, I would like to refer to the value of international public discussion that contributes over the long term to the creation, universalization and effective implementation of international commitments relating to weapons of mass destruction. Among other things, such discussion has contributed strongly to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWTC), which in effect represent the universal perception of the total unacceptability of biological and chemical weapons. The everyday relevance of that contribution has been well illustrated — for example, in the discussion on the codes of conduct for scientists in the context of the BTWC.

Mr. Da Rocha Paranhos (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have two statements to make: one on biological weapons and one on chemical weapons. I will begin with biological weapons.

I am taking the floor on behalf of the States parties of MERCOSUR: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, and the associated States Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

The countries members of MERCOSUR and associated States reaffirm our resolve to contribute to the strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention. It is clear to us that multilateralism is the best way to strengthen the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes regarding weapons of mass destruction. We recall the Declaration on Security in the Americas, adopted at the special security conference held in Mexico City in October 2003, and resolution 2107 of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, adopted on 7 June 2005, in which the States of the hemisphere declared their objective of making the Americas a region free of biological and chemical weapons.

Likewise, we recall the Declaration on the South American Zone of Peace and Cooperation, signed in Guayaquil on 27 July 2002, in which the heads of State of South America banned the siting, development, manufacture, possession, deployment, testing and use of all types of weapons of mass destruction, including biological and toxin weapons, as well as their transit through the countries of the region, in accordance with the relevant international conventions.

The countries of MERCOSUR and associated countries express once again the importance of establishing and strengthening efficient national monitoring regimes as an important part of the collective effort to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Furthermore, we emphasize the role of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in the context of multilateral regimes to that end.

I should like to highlight the importance of universalization of the Convention and of progress in its implementation, which presupposes efficient follow-up and support mechanisms. Likewise, we

understand that it is essential to develop instruments to strengthen international assistance and cooperation and to strengthen confidence-building measures, including follow-up and support mechanisms with regard to the Convention.

In that connection, we stress that universalization of the Convention and the withdrawal of all reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol are important steps towards the fulfilment of the purpose of that instrument and the strengthening of the ban against the use of biological weapons. Moreover, we believe it is essential to promote scientific cooperation and the transfer of technology as incentives for universalization of the Convention.

The countries of MERCOSUR and associated countries agree that it is important to provide the Convention with a verification mechanism. Likewise, in the absence of an international verification mechanism, confidence-building measures are necessary for better and more effective implementation of the Convention's provisions.

The countries of MERCOSUR and the associated countries believe it is essential to continue the work of strengthening the Convention and its implementation beyond the Sixth Review Conference. In that connection, we support the establishment of an administrative unit to provide technical support to States parties. In addition, we urge that the work of the Convention should enjoy broad participation by civil society, the private sector, the scientific community and the relevant international organizations in their respective spheres of competence.

Finally, we express our expectation that the Convention's Sixth Review Conference will formulate recommendations and adopt decisions with a view to strengthening the multilateral legal framework to eliminate any possibility of the existence of biological weapons and to prevent the development of biological and toxin agents as weapons of mass destruction.

I shall now proceed with my statement on behalf of MERCOSUR with regard to chemical weapons. I am again speaking on behalf of the States parties of MERCOSUR: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, and the associated States Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

At the outset, I should like to reaffirm the commitment of the countries members of MERCOSUR and associated countries to the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation set out in the Chemical Weapons Convention. MERCOSUR reaffirms its goal of achieving full implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), on weapons of mass destruction and non-State actors. We commend the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for its efforts to achieve universalization of the Convention. To date, those efforts have resulted in the ratification of the Convention by 180 States.

We, the countries of MERCOSUR and associated countries, believe that cooperation among States parties is essential not only to achieve national implementation — including through greater cooperation on the part of developed countries — but also to ensure support for efficient OPCW programmes to develop the scientific capacities of professionals in the sphere of the peaceful use of chemical activity.

We attach particular importance to efforts to improve the Convention's verification and monitoring mechanisms. At the same time, the countries of MERCOSUR and associated countries believe it is essential to intensify cooperation to prevent or punish behaviour that is contrary to the purposes of the Convention. Such cooperation can be provided through support by States parties for the development of legislation permitting the establishment of appropriate monitoring mechanisms, through assistance in the event of a chemical attack and through international cooperation in the criminal field.

Furthermore, we reiterate our appeal to countries possessing chemical weapons to destroy their arsenals. Delay in the destruction of those arsenals is an element that can affect the credibility of the important work being carried out under the Convention.

The countries members of MERCOSUR and associated countries consider that the Convention is an essential tool in the fight against the proliferation of chemical weapons and in efforts to prevent the use of those weapons for terrorist purposes. We thus call for greater cooperation among the States of every region in order to improve border and customs controls, inter alia by training national personnel charged with those tasks.

Ms. Frost (Canada): This statement will address chemical weapons and biological weapons. This debate comes at an important time in the international security

agenda. We must ensure that our two legally binding mechanisms, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), remain as pertinent as ever to our security.

Next month, States parties to the BTWC will convene in Geneva for the Sixth Review Conference. Ambassador Masood Khan of Pakistan, the President-designate of the Conference, has been working diligently to create the proper environment and conditions for success. We thank Ambassador Khan for his participation today. It is clear that he has established reasonable objectives, and we fully share his commitment to achieving a positive outcome. We urge all States parties to give him their unqualified support in these efforts. There have been significant contributions made to that end. Japan, for example, hosted a conference in February of this year aimed at developing an open dialogue on ways and means to strengthen the norms and implementation of the Convention.

Canada has likewise contributed. We have put forward a package of measures to build accountability within the Convention. Our point of departure is that States Parties to the Convention are accountable to one another in implementing the obligations they each have accepted in becoming States parties and in adopting commitments undertaken together in subsequent Review Conferences. From this perspective, we have identified four areas in which efforts to strengthen the BTWC could be further pursued: national implementation, confidence-building measures, implementation support and annual meetings.

While the measures we are proposing enjoy wide support among States parties, they are not meant to be exhaustive. We note that other States parties, following a similar approach, have put forward important concrete proposals of their own. We should examine carefully all efforts and ideas that will take us towards our common goal of a strengthened Convention.

We are working closely with other States parties in the run-up to the Review Conference. Through such collaboration, we hope to bring increased weight and focus to proposals that build on our accountability framework. Most recently, Canada co-sponsored a conference at Wilton Park in the United Kingdom that brought together a broad range of Government, private sector and academic experts to examine issues surrounding biological weapons and chemical weapons disarmament and non-proliferation.

Turning to the subject of chemical weapons disarmament, we must not become complacent. While the CWC has become a model of a verifiable disarmament agreement, it still faces important challenges. Next month, and again in December, States parties will be asked to address the question of extensions to destruction deadlines. While we might understand the circumstances that have contributed to the necessity for some possessor States to invoke the extension provisions of the Convention, we do not easily accept this request. Even this five-year, one-time-only extension may not be sufficient to ensure the total destruction of all existing stockpiles of chemical weapons. We therefore encourage possessor States to redouble their efforts to rid the world of the threat of chemical weapons by destroying their stockpiles as quickly as feasible.

The Chemical Weapons Convention will have its second Review Conference in April 2008, some 18 months from now. It is not too soon to begin taking stock of the Convention's implementation and examining how States parties might best ensure its continuing relevance as a key element of our security.

I would be remiss if I did not compliment the extensive efforts by Director-General Rogelio Pfirter and the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in pursuing an effective programme of universalization for the Convention.

With the recent accession of its one hundred-eightieth member, the CWC is approaching true universality, thanks to the dedicated work of many people. We will continue to support such efforts until every country has become a State party and is fully implementing its obligations under the Convention.

The arms control and disarmament agenda has suffered disappointments in recent years. We have not been able to achieve the objectives we have set for ourselves. We cannot let this happen again with the BTWC Review Conference. Canada is committed to working closely with Ambassador Khan and all the other States parties to help build a more secure world for all.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): I too would thank Ambassador Masood Khan for the very comprehensive

overview that he gave of his plans for the upcoming Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Review Conference. We see the Review Conference as an opportunity for States to agree on practical implementation measures to take forward the work of the BWC. We are confident that the proposed schedule will facilitate a comprehensive review of the treaty as well as encompassing forward-looking elements.

We are, essentially, looking for ways to ensure that the BWC remains relevant in a dynamic biotechnology environment. To that end, we support the development of an intersessional process which implements work already done on overarching codes of conduct and scientific cooperation and which is flexible enough to accommodate work on any new issues in the Convention's implementation that may arise during the course of the next review period. A strengthened implementation support capacity would result in concrete gains for the Convention's work, particularly in the fields of national implementation and confidence-building measures.

New Zealand also attaches high importance to the work under the Chemical Weapons Convention, and to the implementation work done by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The eleventh session of the Conference of the States Parties to that Convention will provide an opportunity to evaluate progress. For our part, we will be emphasizing that all chemical weapons stockpiles must be destroyed by 2012, the deadline in the Convention. We will also continue to focus on universalization and implementation of the Convention, particularly in the Pacific, as well as on improving the current methodology for selecting sites for inspections. New Zealand is also making a practical contribution to the destruction of chemical weapons through our contribution to the Group of Eight Global Partnership in Shchuch'ye, Russia.

While I have the floor, let me briefly address the disarmament aspects of outer space. It is in all our interests to preserve space for the development of peaceful technologies and scientific exploration. Preventing the weaponization of outer space is fundamental to safeguarding our ability to access space resources, both now and in the future. New Zealand supports work towards a more comprehensive legal framework regulating the demilitarization of outer space. Arguments that there is no current arms race in space and therefore no need to address this issue ignore the preventive benefits of adopting a precautionary approach. As an interim step, in our view, there is an important role for transparency and confidence-building measure with regard to outer space.

Mr. Cheng Jingye (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): My statement relates to the issue of outer space.

Next year marks the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Outer Space Treaty. Over the decades, the Treaty — the first important step taken by the international community to safeguard the security of outer space — has played a significant role in ensuring the peaceful uses of outer space. Given the rapid development of outer space science and technology, the international community is faced with the pressing task of strengthening the effectiveness and universality of the Outer Space Treaty so as to better preserve the sustainable peace and security of outer space. This is an issue which we need to consider, explore and address through appropriate and proactive measures.

Over the past five decades, humankind has come a long way in the exploration and utilization of outer space, and the significant achievements thus made have helped to advance human civilization. Today, outer space, like the land, the ocean and the sky, has become an integral part of our lives — one on which we increasingly depend.

During the twenty-first century, a growing number of countries will take part in and benefit from the exploration and utilization of outer space. More than ever, the sustainable peace of outer space is closely linked with each and every country's security, development and prosperity. As the Chinese President, Mr. Hu Jintao, pointed out on the occasion of the thirty-sixth Scientific Assembly of the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR), outer space is the common heritage of humankind; the exploration, peaceful utilization and exploitation of outer space is the common right of all peoples; and ensuring that outer space remains peaceful and clean is the common obligation of humankind.

Every year the General Assembly adopts a draft resolution on this issue by an overwhelming majority — a fact that explicitly reflects the common aspirations and determination of the peoples of the world. What is worrying, however, is that since the exploitation of outer space began, the spectre of the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space has

been haunting the international community. Given the continuous development of space science and technology, this danger looms larger with each passing day.

A world free from outer space weapons is no less important than a world free from weapons of mass destruction. History has repeatedly shown that prevention is more effective and less costly than cure. We have already encountered many obstacles on the difficult path towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Humankind must not be allowed to sink into the morass of the weaponization of outer space as a result of our inaction now.

To conclude a new international legal instrument to close the loopholes in the existing legal framework relating to outer space is the only effective way of coping with the challenges of the weaponization of outer space. For 10 consecutive years, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva established and re-established its Ad Hoc Committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, accumulating rich experience in dealing with the issue of outer space in an appropriate manner.

We note with satisfaction that this year the Conference on Disarmament conducted an important, meaningful, structured and focused debate on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. During the debate, a majority of States members of the Conference expressed their concerns about the trend towards the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space, and voiced their support for the Conference on Disarmament's engaging in substantive work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Many countries sent experts to the discussions, and several countries — including China, the Russian Federation and Canada — submitted working documents on the issue. During the debate, in-depth and extensive exchanges of views from the political, legal, technological and financial angles on issues concerning a future legal instrument — including definitions, scope, verification, confidence-building measures and the security of real assets in outer space — were conducted among all parties. The debate had a fruitful outcome, and showed that the international community's awareness of the importance of preventing the weaponization of outer space is increasing and that common ground on concluding a new legal instrument is expanding.

It is also noteworthy that, in March this year, China, the Russian Federation, Canada and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, as well as the Simons Foundation of Canada, once again co-sponsored an international conference on outer space. At that conference, the theme of which was "Building the architecture for sustainable space security", participants engaged in heated and frank discussions on topics such as threats to the peaceful uses of outer space, approaches for ensuring space security, et cetera. The many constructive proposals and ideas that were put forward will serve as useful references for future work in the Conference on Disarmament.

China believes that the Conference on Disarmament should re-establish an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space at an early date so that substantive work can be conducted on the issue of the prevention of the weaponization of outer space. That would be the best way to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty. We are looking forward to the early achievement of that goal.

China is ready to join with all other States in continuing our unremitting efforts to that end.

Mr. Streuli (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank Ambassador Masood Khan for his presentation, which held my delegation's attention. I am pleased to work with him and look forward to working under his presidency during the next Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

During the general debate, I stressed the fact that biological weapons are a source of great concern for my country. Indeed, knowledge and technology in the area of biotechnology and genetic sciences are evolving rapidly, in both the civilian and the military fields, with the consequence that there is a growing risk of abuse. In the view of Switzerland, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) is the essential framework, allowing us to hold discussions aimed at dealing with and preventing, in a coordinated fashion, the biological threat — whether it comes from a State or from elsewhere. We therefore appeal to all States that have not yet signed or ratified the BTWC or the 1925 Geneva Protocol to do so soon as possible.

We also appeal once again to all States members of the BTWC to find common ground during the next Review Conference. In particular, we would like a follow-up process to be established that would make it possible to strengthen and ensure respect for the Convention.

Switzerland will certainly make an active and constructive contribution to the success of the Review Conference. From that perspective, my delegation is drafting a working document on confidence-building measures, and to that end we are holding informal consultations.

I would like to take this opportunity also to reaffirm my country's commitment to the Convention on Chemical Weapons — the only disarmament treaty that bans an entire category of weapons of mass destruction and whose implementation is effective. Switzerland welcomes the progress achieved since its entry into force and actively supports the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We are particularly pleased to note that, through the open-ended working group, delegations to the OPCW are already making preparations for the second Review Conference, which is to be held in 2008. We hope that cooperation will be as fruitful and constructive in the context of the Chemical Weapons Convention as it was with respect to the Biological Weapons Convention, which next month in Geneva will be the subject of a sixth Review Conference.

Mr. Luaces (United States of America): Over the past several decades, the use of outer space has become increasingly important to all aspects of international commerce, peace and security. The information revolution that has transformed the global economy depends to a very large extent on our collective advances in space, including in the fields of communications, navigation and remote sensing.

The increased importance of outer space to both commerce and national security has given rise to a number of concerns around the world, including the potential vulnerability of space systems to disruption from both natural and manmade sources.

The international community must recognize, as the United States does, that protection of space access is a key objective. We consider space capabilities to be vital to our national interests, whether these capabilities are in ground or space segments, which include the supporting links of such networks.

Space systems should be able to pass through, and operate in, space without interference. It is critical to preserve freedom of action in space, and the United States is committed to ensuring that our freedom of action in space remains unhindered. All countries should share this interest in unfettered access to and use of space and in dissuading or deterring others from impeding either access to or use of space for peaceful purposes or the development of capabilities intended to serve that purpose.

In that spirit, President Bush recently authorized a new national space policy that sets forth the guiding principles of United States space programmes and activities and is designed to re-energize our efforts to develop and maintain robust and effective space capabilities for civil, commercial and national security purposes.

The United States recognizes the critical importance of space access and use for our economy and our national security. This new policy statement reaffirms our longstanding commitment to ensuring peaceful access to and use of space.

The modern world relies upon this free right of passage in space. We all should be committed to that right, because to lose access to space would have profound consequences for the global economy and our everyday lives. Technology derived from our accomplishments in space touches nearly every aspect of everyday life. From cars to planes, from the farmer's crops to the soldier's battlefield awareness, space technology has had a far-reaching impact on our lives.

These are important principles to bear in mind. The danger against which we all must be vigilant is not some theoretical arms race in space but threats that would deny peaceful access to and use of space, especially ground-based space-denial capabilities intended to impede the free access to and use of space systems and services, because any satellite capable of manoeuvring can be used to destroy another satellite simply by physical collision. Space does not lend itself to an old-style "arms-control" approach. In fact, such an approach could be counterproductive if it were to create restrictions upon free access to space and erode the important principles of free transit and operations in space.

For these reasons, the United States opposes proposed negotiations on the so-called prevention of an arms race in outer space. Indeed, the international

community should oppose, and the United States will oppose, the development of new legal regimes or other restrictions that seek to prohibit or limit access to or use of space.

Our views on this matter are clear and easily summarized.

First, there is no arms race in space.

Secondly, there is no prospect of an arms race in space.

Thirdly, the United States will continue to protect its access to and use of space.

The international community must recognize and act upon its vital interest in preserving free access to and use of this crucial medium. Yet our cooperation should not be limited to imposing restrictions on free access to and use of space. We also should continue to work together to advance international space cooperation to improve the global community's use of space.

The United States already has a number of efforts under way to help safeguard and improve the peaceful uses of outer space for all. For example, the United States provides information on objects in space through a public-domain website. We have led the way in negotiating guidelines for mitigating the dangers to space operations presented by orbital debris. We also have extended assistance to other space-faring nations by offering help in collision avoidance, such as during China's first two manned space launches.

In addition, in order to help avoid the damaging effects that solar weather can have on radio frequency communications, we provide free information to all through a website of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on solar radiation storms and radio blackouts. These are just a few examples of what the United States is doing to help make space safer and more productive for all States.

The international community should follow the example of the United States and explore additional ways to cooperate. Our new national space policy recognizes the importance of international cooperation and continues to emphasize its importance. In fact, this is the core of the United States' national space policy. We recognize our vital national interest in unhindered access to and use of space, and we are firmly committed to protecting it. At the same time, we remain dedicated to improving the ways in which all States can benefit from this invaluable medium of space in service of economic development, scientific advancement and international peace and security.

Mr. Chang Dong-hee (Republic of Korea): I thank Ambassador Masood Khan, President-designate of the forthcoming Sixth Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Review Conference, for his excellent presentation, which was very useful and informative. I look forward to working closely with him during the Review Conference.

The Biological Weapons Convention remains the fundamental legal and normative foundation for our collective endeavours to prohibit and prevent the use of biological and bio-toxic weapons. However, as stated by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who was quoted by Ambassador Khan in his presentation, with advances in biotechnology and the life sciences as well as their widespread availability, there is a greater risk that proliferators, both State and non-State, might take advantage of loopholes inherent in the BWC. In the light of the potential threats posed by these developments, there is an urgent need to reinforce the BWC. This is indeed imperative if we wish to address these new challenges adequately, while still maximizing the benefits of biotechnology for peaceful uses.

That is why my delegation attaches particular importance to the upcoming Sixth Review Conference, to be held in November. Following the failure of the previous Review Conference, in 2001, my delegation hopes that the Conference this year will provide us with a fresh opportunity to assess how the Convention in its entirety has been working for the past 10 years. Through a comprehensive article-by-article review of the Convention, we should identify the areas in which additional work and cooperation among States parties are needed. States parties should explore ways to ensure full implementation and to enhance the effectiveness of the Convention.

In this regard, our discussions over the past three years attest to the value of intersessional work, which we believe should continue beyond the Sixth Review Conference. Indeed, it would be constructive for the intersessional work to be conducted on a more regular and more formal basis. Proceeding in this way would ensure increased continuity between Review Conferences.

Moreover, we should also seriously consider ways to further promote universal adherence and national implementation of the Convention, particularly of the confidence-building measures it sets out. To that end, the Republic of Korea is drawing up a working paper on the universalization of the Convention, which we will circulate in due course. Our efforts to ensure the prohibition of biological weapons, combat their proliferation and secure the viability of the BWC regime demand a successful outcome of the upcoming Review Conference. My delegation calls on all States parties to show flexibility and take an open-minded approach so that we can achieve significant tangible results.

Turning to the matter of chemical weapons, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is held in high regard by the international community as a model for disarmament and non-proliferation organizations. My delegation believes that the efforts of possessor States towards the non-discriminative destruction of their chemical weapons have greatly contributed to that positive appraisal. My delegation is confident that all possessor States are fully committed to making their best efforts to complete the destruction of their chemical weapons stockpiles as soon as possible. We understand that stockpile destruction may be delayed by domestic factors such as environmental protection requirements and concerns for the safety of workers involved in the destruction process. Nevertheless, we note that the Convention clearly stipulates that in no case shall the deadline for a State party to complete its destruction of all chemical weapons be extended beyond April 2012. We urge all possessor States, without any exception, to do their utmost to meet that obligation.

To achieve the fundamental goal of the Convention, namely the total destruction of all chemical weapons worldwide, universal accession is obviously necessary, and this has been a top priority for the OPCW. In this regard, my delegation greatly appreciates the efforts of the OPCW Director-General and Technical Secretariat to achieve the goal, set at the tenth Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), of increasing the number of States parties to 180 by the end of this year.

With some countries still remaining outside the Convention, our challenges have not yet been overcome. As long as those countries choose to remain outside the framework of the CWC, the serious threat of chemical weapons is still with us. We therefore urge those countries to respond to the call from the OPCW immediately and without conditions. We also encourage the OPCW to strengthen its efforts to persuade those countries to participate in the Convention as soon as possible.

As for national implementation of the CWC, my delegation appreciates the progress that has been made to ensure full implementation of the Convention by States parties and commends the Technical Secretariat for the assistance it has provided. However, we must not become complacent. In the light of the increasing threat of terrorist attacks involving weapons of mass destruction, States parties should be especially vigilant in their full implementation of the Convention to ensure that no chemical weapons fall into the wrong hands. We urge all States parties to adopt national CWC implementation measures as soon as possible.

Mr. Meyer (Canada): Let me first, Madam Chairperson, express my appreciation for your efforts to try to organize our thematic debate this afternoon by separating out two very distinct cluster topics, the first being on other weapons of mass destruction, under which we normally discuss biological and chemical weapons issues, and the second being missiles and outer space. I think it is very much in keeping with the reform aims of the Committee that we extract more value and greater coherence from our thematic debate portion when we can stick to addressing one topic at a time. In that regard, I would hope that delegations could organize themselves in the future so that we do not mix, so to speak, the poisoned apples of biological weapons with the orbiting oranges of outer space.

My statement today is focused on outer space and the disarmament aspects thereof. The lack in recent years of an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space at the Conference on Disarmament has not prevented some worthwhile discussion and proposals from being generated — proposals which we have a responsibility to consider and, where appropriate, to act upon.

Discussions held at the space security seminar organized by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in March, the series of structured discussions in the Conference on Disarmament during its past session in June and discussion here in the First Committee, taken together, reinforce, in our view, the need to develop an

increasingly broad concept of space security that addresses not only the weaponization of outer space but also the broader military, environmental, commercial and civil dimensions of space.

When we talk about ensuring secure and sustainable access to and use of space for peaceful purposes, we are in fact using such a broad approach to space security. As we all draw ever-increasing benefits from space assets, Canada believes strongly that spacefaring and non-spacefaring nations alike share a stake and a responsibility in ensuring that human actions do not jeopardize the current and future benefits offered to us by outer space.

The Russian Federation is in favour of strengthening the multilateral bases for addressing the challenges of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), in strict observance of international agreements in this area. We need to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as we said yesterday and we attach great importance to the strict observance of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (Geneva Protocol of 1925), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). The need for urgent action in the area of the destruction of chemical and the non-proliferation of biological weapons is driven today above all by the danger of their falling into the hands of terrorists.

We feel that the Geneva Protocol of 1925 is still very topical and current. Measures aimed at helping to strengthen its regime would include to remove reservations expressed by States when ratifying the document. Russia has withdrawn such reservations. We call on other parties to the Protocol to reject the use of chemical or biological weapons as a retaliatory measure.

We consider the CWC as a key element in the system of international security. In the more than ten years of its existence it has convincingly proven its importance in sparing the world of the most lethal form of weapons. It has been an effective instrument for curbing the proliferation of chemical weapons. It has also proven its positive potential for increasing cooperation in the peaceful use of technology and knowledge in the area of chemistry.

Russia abides by its disarmament obligations and is consistently implementing them. We are doing everything possible to complete the elimination of chemical arsenals within the deadlines provided for in the Convention. In September 2006, we put a third Russian chemical weapons destruction facility into operation. In the near future, we will cross an important threshold by having destroyed 10 per cent of the Russian stockpiles of toxic substances.

I need to stress that the task of destroying chemical weapons on the scale that Russia faces cannot be dealt with by one State alone. We are constantly expanding State financing for research programmes for the destruction of chemical weapons. At the same time, we would like to express our gratitude to all countries that have been giving assistance in the elimination of chemical arsenals. Such assistance is extremely important. Russia receives such helpful financial and technical assistance from the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, Canada, the Czech Republic, the European Union and New Zealand.

However, I should like to note that today we still have an acute problem of increasing the effectiveness of such actions. I would like to focus attention on the fact that the main assistance will be needed from 2006 to 2008, when we will be engaged in the most active phase of our construction of industrial facilities to destroy chemical weapons.

An important priority of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague is achieving the Convention's universality. Recently, in this room, the General-Director, Mr. Pfirter, noted that only 15 States remain outside the Convention and that the implementation of the Action Plan to promote universality will play a substantial role in expanding State participation.

The necessary element for the stable functioning of the CWC is the adoption by each Member State of national measures to implement the Convention's provisions. We are ready to give assistance to other States in developing national legislation and in sharing the experience that we have acquired. We have developed such cooperation within the Commonwealth of Independent States.

In the context of efforts to prevent the proliferation of biological weapons, we have

consistently supported the implementation of the regime established by the BWC. An important stage towards this end is the sixth Review Conference coming at the end of this year. We believe that the Review Conference should be a detailed review, article by article, of the operation of the Convention and the tangible steps to be taken during the next five-year period to enhance the effectiveness of its activities. We still feel that the most effective method for strengthening the Convention is the resumption of work of its verification mechanisms under a legally binding document. It would make it possible to implement effective and objective verification of the observance of the Convention by all States parties.

Without a consensus on this question, we would be in favour of continuing intersessional work, with annual meetings of experts and of States parties to the Convention. That approach worked well in the years 2003-2005.

An important measure helping to prevent the proliferation of biological weapons would be a further universalization of the BWC. Therefore, we call on States that have not yet done so to adhere to it.

In the context of non-proliferation of chemical and biological weapons, and, above all, the urgent need to prevent their falling into the hands of non-State actors, particularly terrorists, we need to attach prime importance to the full implementation by all States of the provisions of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). This resolution is aimed at creating at the national level developed legislative, law enforcement and organizational measures to ensure the safety, integrity and physical security not only of chemical weapons, but also materials associated with chemical and biological weapons, namely, dual-use materials and technologies.

The transfer of any of these weapons is not very likely and the main threat of proliferation is now to be found from the uncontrolled trafficking and the risk of the leakage of dual-use chemical and biological substances. In this connection, of particular importance are the provisions of resolution 1540 (2004) on the need to create and strengthen verification measures on export and trans-border transport of such materials. We actively support the work of the Security Council Committee set up under resolution 1540 (2004).

We view positively the draft resolutions proposed by Poland and Hungary in support of the CWC and the BWC and we feel that we can support them.

Mr. Rivasseau (France) (*spoke in French*): Permit me to congratulate you on your skilful leadership of our discussions. I would like to refer to the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, which has 134 States Parties. The final declaration of a French-Swiss seminar on the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of that Protocol, held in Geneva in June 2005, called for withdrawal of all reservations to that Protocol. As you know, France is the depositary for that Protocol and withdrew its reservations in 1996. We consider that the Protocol's provisions have the force of customary law.

France would like to introduce a non-paper, which, of course, we would like to make available to delegations. I would like to read it out, because it is sufficiently short to do so.

> "The Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, opened for signature in Geneva on 17 June 1925 and for which France is the depositary, is the ancestor of the two pillars of current disarmament instruments: the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Meeting both the needs of mankind and the aims of disarmament and non-proliferation, that Protocol continues to be current, especially in the biological sphere, where it is the only text to prohibit explicitly the use of biological weapons. The ancient date of the Protocol — last year was its eightieth anniversary — explains why certain States have not recently given great attention to this Protocol or to their status in relation to its provisions. In recent years, nonetheless, many States have withdrawn their reservations. Only 22 States maintain their reservations today, and those reservations are often incompatible with their obligations under the framework of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention.
>
> "France, therefore, invites all States Parties that made reservations when adhering to the Protocol

to re-consider in a constructive manner and to ensure the comprehensive prohibition of chemical and biological weapons the withdrawal of their reservations."

As general information, France is making available an Internet site that lists all the States Parties to the Protocol, as well as an updated official list of reservations. That information can be consulted at www.doc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/pacte under the section on multilateral treaties, France depositaire, tab number 15.

Ms. Millar (Australia): At the outset, I would like to extend my delegation's thanks to Ambassador Khan for his informative and useful presentations on the forthcoming Review Conference on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). The BWC Review Conference provides a vital opportunity for the international community to strengthen its defences against the proliferation of biological and toxin weapons. It is an opportunity that we can ill afford to squander; all the more so while the threat from bio-terrorism persists.

Australia has been a long-standing advocate for the full and effective implementation of the BWC — as we have been for other complimentary measures, including the Proliferation Security Initiative and the Australia Group. And so, we will approach the BWC Review Conference with clear aims to strengthen the Treaty and ensure its continuing relevance to the security needs of its parties. To this end, Australia will be encouraging States Parties to fulfil their obligations under the Convention and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) to prohibit and prevent the development and production of biological agents and toxins.

Of particular importance is the need for States Parties to examine national implementation of the Convention. States need to have in place the necessary legislative, administrative and enforcement measures to ensure effective implementation of the BWC and confidence among its States Parties. With this in mind, Australia will propose that States Parties designate a national authority to coordinate domestic compliance with the BWC and act as a single liaison point for contact between States Parties. We will also encourage a close examination of the BWC confidence-building measures (CBMs). The CBMs are a vital transparency measure, but we must increase the participation in and the value of the CBM process to ensure its continued relevance in an environment of rapidly evolving security threats and technology.

National implementation of the BWC is vital to its continuing relevance. But we must also take care of the institution of the Convention itself. Australia has found the intersessional process since the fifth Review Conference to be valuable. We look to a decision this year on a further, focused intersessional process, leading to the Review Conference in 2011. Such a process should have practical benefits for implementation of the Convention and should meet the security needs of States Parties. Moreover, this process should be assisted by a continuation and enhancement of the support provided to States Parties through the BWC meetings Secretariat. Not only could such a unit assist with meetings, but it might also help in such areas as universalization and CBM management.

The BWC is strong, but we must do more to realise its universalization and strengthen its effectiveness against the spread of biological weapons. With this in mind, Australia will put forward an action plan for the universalization of the BWC at the Review Conference. The plan will offer clear and practical steps States Parties can take to encourage and assist States to join this vital convention.

Australia's action plan is just one example of the positive approach States Parties are taking to the Review Conference. Australia, with Japan, Canada, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Norway and New Zealand, has already begun preparation of papers on other issues. We welcome the contributions of the European Union and Latin American countries to prepare for the meeting. We sincerely hope that with such a positive approach, States Parties will make the most of the BWC Review Conference to strengthen global defences against the proliferation of biological and toxin weapons.

Ms. Leong (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our statement will refer to the question of outer space. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wishes to reiterate its full support for the designation of outer space as the common heritage of mankind and, in particular, for reserving its use for exclusively peaceful purposes. In this regard, we note with great concern the position of several countries in favour of the emplacement of various military systems in outer space of both offensive and defensive nature. That would endanger the collective security of mankind, in addition to

violating the principle, which considers this zone to be the common heritage of mankind, as established in the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

Our country has signed the Outer Space Treaty, the Rescue Agreement and the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects. In addition to this, we are a party to other international instruments related to space, such as the (1963) Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, an agreement with the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (INTELSAT) and the International Telecommunications Union Convention. This is the legal framework that guides our international action in matters of outer space.

In this regard, we hope that the negotiations held within the Conference on Disarmament for the purpose of achieving an international instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space may reach completion and succeed. Furthermore, our country considers that States that possess an important technological capacity in space should renounce the emplacement of any military system, defensive or offensive, in outer space. They should also agree to furnish information about their activities in this regard. We support the adoption of more transparency measures and confidence-building measures in activities relating to outer space.

Venezuela is fully committed to the principles which promote the use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes. In November 2005, our Government authorized the establishment of the Foundation for the Venezuelan Space Centre. It was established on 3 February 2006. This foundation is aimed at the design, coordination and implementation of the policies of our executive branch dealing with the peaceful use of outer space, and will act as the national specialized decentralized agency in matters of air and space.

In this regard, we wish to emphasize the cooperation agreement for the implementation of the project on the peaceful use of space between our Government and the People's Republic of China, which provides for the acquisition, by Venezuela, of the Simón Bolívar satellite, and the establishment of a space centre within the country. This marks the beginning of our national experience beyond the Earth's skies through a State policy based on peaceful purposes and a social vision. This space cooperation agreement is aimed at the development of space technologies, which spearhead the promotion and the development of the social policies of our national Government.

In sum, Venezuela maintains that a real commitment that seeks to prevent an arms race in outer space is inextricably linked to a strengthening of international cooperation, with a view to establishing an international regime based on a binding instrument that guarantees egalitarian respect for their provisions by all countries and which ensures an equitable and well balanced access to the scientific and technological benefits, derived from the peaceful use of outer space. There is no doubt that the United Nations and the Commission on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space have a fundamental role to play in the achievement of these objectives.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Firstly, I would like to stress, once again, that we would feel it useful to hold a discussion on each thematic cluster. By mixing two clusters into one discussion period, it makes it hard for us to focus on a discussion of one theme.

The prevention of the arms race in outer space is a priority for the Russian Federation. It is a major and urgent problem. This year, we were again among the sponsors of a draft resolution on preventing the arms race in outer space. The timeliness of this draft is not only not shrinking, but is, in fact, growing.

This year, at the Conference on Disarmament, there was an interesting, detailed and successful debate on the question on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This showed that all States are interested in outer space not being turned into a battlefield, that security in space be ensured and that there will also be proper functioning of space objects. This allows us to feel that we can achieve consensus on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

This is a most important question directly effecting the interests of security and development of all States. If we look at this objectively and in an unbiased way, then of all of the items of the agenda for the Conference on Disarmament, the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space met with the greatest unanimity among delegations. On the other hand, however, the number of delegations that still had

doubts about the importance of immediately resuming work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space was the smallest that we have ever had.

I say this without detriment to the discussion of other issues discussed at the Conference on Disarmament. Since this year as well, the discussions again confirmed that the resumption of substantive work on the Conference on Disarmament is only possible with balanced agreement on its programme of work. During the debate interesting, weighty and profound comments and proposals were made relating to the proposal of the Russian Federation and China to develop a treaty on the prevention of the emplacement of weapons in outer space and the use of force or the threat of the use of force against space objects and on measures for transparency in confidence building and space activities, including in the context of this treaty.

The idea of a new treaty has been discussed for more than four years in the Conference on Disarmament. During the various activities of the thematic meetings on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, representatives of more than 20 delegations and regional groups spoke and nine working papers were presented. With the help of experts from seven participating States, we were able to plan the work of the special committee of the Conference on Disarmament on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, where both the substantive and political aspects will be taken into account. After more than 20 years of consideration of this topic in the Conference on Disarmament, we have made tangible progress in resolving and developing solutions to problems in that area.

More importantly, the Conference concluded that it should, as soon as possible, resume its substantive work on the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We are at a stage when it is counter-productive to wait until the issue is mature. Frankly, when this question matures, it will already be too late We must do everything to ensure that this question never becomes mature.

Many delegations at the Conference on Disarmament agreed with the idea of concentrating future work of the Conference with regard to the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space or an existing practical proposal, namely, to develop a new treaty on the prevention of deployment of weapons in outer space and on the threat or the use of force against space objects are the main elements contained in document CD/1679. In that connection and given the results of the debate we had in the Conference on Disarmament, we would like to clarify once again for all Member States of the United Nations, the thrust of the new treaty that is being proposed in CD/1679. Firstly, I would like to say that we are not proposing a treaty to prevent an arms race in outer space. Our idea is not a treaty on preventing an arms race in outer space. To call our initiative that would not be correct. It would be closer to the truth to call the new treaty on the non-weaponization of outer space or a treaty on the non-stationing of weapons in outer space, although that would not be its final name.

The aim here is simple. We are trying to resolve the problem differently. If we prohibit weapons in outer space and all States observe that prohibition, then there is no arms race in outer space. An arms race is not possible in a sphere where there is a general prohibition on weapons. In other words, in solving the question of the non-weaponization of space, we erect a barrier against an arms race in outer space. However, that is not sufficient. We also believe that interfering in the regular functioning of space objects could be done without the use of space weapons, it could be done using weapons based elsewhere or other actions not involving weapons. In order to protect space objects from such threats and prevent any other actions involving the use of force in space, we propose to augment the prohibition of the weaponization of outer space by adding one more obligation, namely, the non-use of force or the threat of force against space objects. It would therefore be more correct to call our proposal a new treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the use of force or threat of use of force against space objects.

In document CD/1679 there are three main obligations that form the specific scope of the proposed treaty. The first is not to launch any object with any kind of weapon into Earth orbit, place such a weapon on a celestial body or place them in space in any other manner. Secondly, not to resort to the use of force, or the threat of the use of force against space objects. Thirdly, not to cooperate with or incite other States, groups of States or international organizations to participate in activities that are prohibited under the treaty. Those key elements represent a step forward in international law in ensuring the peaceful status of

outer space and ensuring free access to space, security in space and the normal functioning of space objects.

During the discussions in the Conference on Disarmament, we considered in detail the possible concrete contents of each of the obligations. During the discussion, on the main elements proposed for the new treaty we also discussed the main terms and their definitions. Various versions emerged in that area. Regardless of which versions will ultimately be chosen by all of the interested countries, we made and discussed various concrete proposals on the definition of certain key terms of the future treaty, as contained in document CD/1679. Those terms include "outer space", "space object", "weapon in space" and others.

We wanted very briefly to present the scope of the new treaty and some of its other elements, so we could illustrate the nature of the discussions that took place in the Conference on Disarmament. The discussions were professional and substantive and were aimed at achieving practical results. Of course, there are still specific questions that need further work and delegations have retained those issues for further review at home. It is important that the framework for future detailed work has been clarified. It is also important that the discussions showed the realism and practical feasibility of the provisions of the new treaty. It is not aimed at prohibiting or limiting anything that States now have in space. It is strictly preventive in nature — as we say concerning an illness, prevention is easier than a cure.

We are certain the proposed measures in the new treaty are in the interest of all States, without exception, and we are ready to continue to convince others of that. In any case, any decisions or agreements should be reached based upon consensus and, to that end, Russia will continue its active efforts.

It is now time to move from general words to concrete issues and concrete treatises. I recall that all of the documents and materials in the discussions this year in the Conference on Disarmament on the topic of the prevention of an arms race in outer space are available on the Internet. We invite all States and interested organizations to continue to cooperate closely. We also call upon delegations to prepare seriously and in time for continuing the work in the Conference on Disarmament in 2007 on the topic proposed in document CD/1679, namely, the treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against space objects.

I will conclude by reiterating that the placement of weapons in outer space could bring great evil to all. We must not allow that and we can do that.

Mr. Adji (Indonesia): I will limit my intervention to biological and chemical weapons. First of all, I would like to thank Ambassador Khan of Pakistan, the President-designate of the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) for his informative and comprehensive presentation. I am confident that he will guide the forthcoming Review Conference to a positive outcome.

With regard to biological weapons, Indonesia calls upon States parties to the BTWC to restart negotiations on the protocol of the Convention. In 2001, we unfortunately witnessed the failure of the negotiations on the protocol that would have provided States parties with compliance measures and verification mechanisms. We now need to double our efforts to ensure that the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention remains a vital and effective element of the international response to the threat of biological weapons.

In the absence of a protocol, Indonesia and Australia have co-hosted a regional workshop, whose objective was to highlight the importance as well as facilitate a greater understanding of the need by the States parties in the region to implement the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, so that our common objectives could be fulfilled. The workshop was also organized to encourage countries in the region to recognize the security benefits derived from the full and effective implementation of the Convention.

We believe that it remains the responsibility of States to take effective measures to prevent the misuse of dual-use biological agents. In that regard, the Indonesian working group on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, which consists of various governmental institutions, has started the drafting process for a national programme of action to implement the Convention.

I would now like to turn to the topic of chemical weapons. The so-called three pillars of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) — namely, the destruction of chemical weapons, non-proliferation and

international cooperation should be implemented in a balanced manner and respected by all States parties.

All existing stockpiles of chemical weapons must be destroyed without delay. That is the first pillar of the CWC. We commend the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for providing the necessary technical assistance for this purpose. Indonesia is seriously concerned over the slow pace of chemical weapons destruction by some possessor States and urges those States to confirm with the scheduled deadline of the destruction, as stated in the CWC.

As to the second pillar — that is, curbing the proliferation of hazardous chemical substances — intergovernmental cooperation is essential, so that transboundary movements of these substances can be strictly controlled. Care must be taken, however, so that the peaceful application of dual-use substances, especially for development purposes, is not hampered.

These two pillars of the CWC cannot be effective if we do not, at the same time, promote the third pillar, which is international cooperation and assistance. This is a very important incentive for those countries that have never built chemical weapons to join the Chemical Weapons Convention. While hoping the peaceful application of chemicals will not be restricted, many States parties are still in need of assistance in meeting their CWC obligations. This assistance must be provided. We also need to plan and carry out confidence-building measures, so that States parties can work together more closely.

Indonesia has been able to enhance its national capacity to adhere to the Convention. We have strengthened coordination among our stakeholders at the national level. This has been possible, because we are working in very close collaboration with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW.

As part of Indonesia's contributions to achieving effective progress towards general and complete prohibition of chemical weapons and to promote cooperation in the field of chemistry for peaceful purposes, Indonesia, in conjunction with the OPCW, organized the Fourth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention in Asia, which took place in Jakarta last month. The meeting provided a forum for States parties to the CWC to present their needs for assistance and indicate what assistance they could offer to other States parties. The meeting gave concrete input to the OPCW Technical Secretariat on how it could enhance its assistance to States parties in the region, pursuant to the Conference of States parties decision relating to the implementation of article VII of the CWC.

Ms. Fernando (Sri Lanka): Let me begin by adding my voice to those of other delegations who have spoken of the need for a clearer separation in the debate between the other weapons of mass destruction cluster and the outer space disarmament cluster. I hope that you will be able to convey our views to the next Chairperson of the First Committee.

On the first cluster, we would like to thank Ambassador Khan for his comprehensive presentation on preparations for the Review Conference on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), and we will, of course, give him our fullest support for the successful conclusion of the forthcoming Review Conference.

On the second cluster, we wish to state that Sri Lanka has had a long-abiding interest in the issues of outer space, grounded in our early involvement in the negotiations in the United Nations on pioneering undertakings of international law, which have included the law of the sea and outer space and have led to the defining of the concept of the common heritage of humankind and the formulation of the imperative of keeping space a peaceful arena for all time.

Several treaties and agreements have been concluded over the years to protect space assets, of which the 1967 Outer Space Treaty remains the most important. At the time of the conclusion of that Treaty in the early years of space exploration, only a very few nations had the ability to have their own space programmes. The situation today is quite different, with more than 130 countries possessing some space programmes and over 30 with launch capabilities.

Space technologies are particularly important for developing countries, as they impact on critical areas, such as communications, education, health and the environment, food security and disaster management, among others. Everyone has a stake in space security today.

As the fortieth anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty approaches in 2007, we would urge Member States to work towards its universalization and hope

the Department for Disarmament Affairs will also lend its support, as possible, in this regard.

We all have a stake in examining together present and future threats and to keep outer space peaceful for all humankind. We were pleased, therefore, that there was a positive atmosphere and constructive momentum this year in the Conference on Disarmament, which included taking forward the discussions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Every year, the First Committee adopts, by overwhelming vote, a resolution on the topic, which, recalling Dag Hammarskjöld's wise counsel on the value of such hardy perennials, we believe establishes important principles and universal values, and will eventually have the weight of customary law.

Mr. Prasad (India): My delegation is grateful to Ambassador Masood Khan of Pakistan for his comprehensive presentation this afternoon, and for his painstaking preparations for the forthcoming Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). We look forward to a positive outcome of this Conference and, at the very minimum, hope to have agreement on a forward-looking future intersessional work programme.

I shall confine my very brief remarks for now to the disarmament aspects of outer space. As several delegations, including those of Canada, China, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka and the United States have just pointed out, there has been a dramatic acceleration in recent years in the peaceful uses of outer space and in international cooperation for this purpose. So also has there been increased potential, in particular for developing countries, to leapfrog and become full participants in the technology-based global economy of the twenty-first century.

India, for instance, has in the past year signed agreements with the Russian Federation and the European Union (EU) for cooperation in their Glonas and Galileo programmes, respectively, and the Indian Space Research Organization mission to the moon in 2008 will carry lunar surface mapping instruments from Bulgaria, the European Space Agency and NASA. A connectivity mission between India and the countries of the African Union (AU) is being pursued to provide both communication links and a range of space-enabled development-oriented services.

Given the increasing use of outer space for development purposes and the all-pervasive application of space technology to almost every aspect of modern life, we cannot overlook the importance of the security of assets based in outer space and the enormously harmful consequences of any possible threat to them. We, therefore, strongly support the quest to upgrade the present international legal framework for regulating space activities, established at the relative infancy of the development of space technology, and to buttress and strengthen existing space law for the peaceful use and exploration of outer space.

Respect for the safety and security of space assets and capabilities of all countries is a prerequisite for ensuring the continued flow of space-enabled services for all countries, including to developing countries.

The issue of outer space has been on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament since 1982, and an Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space functioned there for a decade, starting in 1985. That Committee was engaged in examining, as a first step at that stage, issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. These issues remain as relevant today as they were two decades ago, if not more so. Earlier this year, we had useful discussions on that subject in the plenary of the Conference. India supports the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee of the Conference on Disarmament to deal with the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and stands ready to contribute to its consideration in a constructive manner.

Mr. Kolesnik (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): During the general debate, our delegation set out its approach to the questions of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction. Allow me to set out briefly our position on one of today's burning issues: the prevention of an arm's race in outer space. The Republic of Belarus supports the efforts of countries aimed at preserving the peaceful character of outer space. Discussions in the Conference on Disarmament allows us to remain somewhat optimistic. The international community understands the threat of weaponization of outer space. That is not hypothetical; it is real.

We need space for the stable development of future generations. If we manage to create and strengthen a legal foundation for the peaceful use of outer space, then it will serve decades of future generations. If we lose time, then it will take us decades to correct that situation. In this connection, we

support the continuation of the work within the Conference on Disarmament on the problems of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We support the conclusions of the relevant international agreements, together with the development of confidence-building measures and measures for security, particularly as regards the use of outer space.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): I do not have a prepared statement, so my words might not be as beautiful as others, but I would like to make a few remarks on the Biological Weapons Convention and on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. First of all, on the Biological Weapon Convention, I would like thank Ambassador Khan for the very extensive and comprehensive explanation he gave. As many people have already pointed out, we think the upcoming Review Conference is a very important opportunity. We have not had good review for the past ten years. We had a conference, which was interrupted five years ago, and as a result we were unable to have a good review. This is the first comprehensive review in ten years, and we have many items to address. In addition to that, we have an intersessional process, in which we have identified many questions that have not always been included in the articles. We must pay attention to both approaches; that is, the article-by-article approach and the crosscutting issues approach, which involves items that were taken up during the intersessional processes. What is important is that we will have many items to deal with in the coming Review Conference, and we must make a maximum effort to lead the Conference to success under the able guidance of Ambassador Khan. Frankly, there are several items that can be very difficult, but I think we are in a good enough position to proceed and lead the Conference to a success.

Now on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, our discussion was very interesting and, the more I hear, the more interesting it becomes. It is very true that under the presidency of the Russian Federation in the Conference on Disarmament we had very extensive and good discussions on the issue. Today, I also heard some new elements, for instance from the distinguished representative of Venezuela about how their country sees the problem and the domestic developments in that country, which are very new to me because Venezuela has never spoken out on that in the Conference on Disarmament. Coming back to the Conference on Disarmament, under the presidency of the Russian Federation we had good discussions and we have identified various types of issues; one deals with safe operation in outer space, including space debris and the jamming of satellite operations. There are many related items, which we have not addressed. As our colleague from Canada pointed out, these questions must be addressed first in the appropriate specialized agency or forum, like the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space or the International Telecommunication Union. They are the venues where we should study these technical matters first. There are also other concepts that have been mentioned but are, unfortunately, still not quite clear to some countries, including Japan. One example is the weaponization of outer space and the arms race in outer space. These are not entirely clear to us, but they may be very important concepts. I think, therefore, that we have to continue to discuss and try to define what they mean. Right now, for some countries like Japan, they are not yet well defined. I completely agree with countries that have pointed out that it is important to continue to discuss all the related items, with due concern for what is the best framework for addressing these problems.

The President: We will continue our discussion tomorrow. We will then proceed to the introduction of draft resolutions. Tomorrow and on Friday the Committee will proceed with its thematic discussion on the subject of conventional weapons. Tomorrow, we will also have two guest speakers, the President of the United Nations Review Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. I give the floor to France to speak on Other Matters.

Ms. Fernando (Sri Lanka): I wanted to thank the Secretary of the Committee for having responded to my request yesterday and for informing us which draft resolutions would be introduced. We thought it would be today, but it will be tomorrow.

However, Madam Chairperson, I wonder if, when you make the announcement, you could provide this information to the Committee as a whole. That would probably be quite useful for all representatives.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.